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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses an approach to identifying and selecting teacher competencies. This approach includes identifying desired pupil outcomes, deciding the kinds of teachers necessary to ensure this type of outcome, defining what an effective teacher is and does, focusing on competencies that relate to effective teaching and categorizing them. Competencies include general or cluster objectives and specific or module objectives. Cluster goals are defined and module objectives are identified according to priority within the framework of the cluster objectives. An example of implementing a module objective concerning an informal reading inventory concludes this paper. (PD)

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Identification and Selection of Teacher Competencies

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Identification and Selection of Teacher Competencies

When an individual program or an institution has decided to develop a Competency Based Teacher Education Program it is important to identify the various Competencies which will be the basis for such a program. It then becomes apparent that the identification of such competencies is a very critical step in the entire process.

If educators could agree on what an effective teacher really looks like, and if we had the time to give every teacher a number of years of experience this step would be relatively easy. However, we do not have such agreement, and it is necessary to place the various competencies on a continuum from pre-service through in-service. Each program must make its own decisions based upon the research available, and upon some "gut level" feelings. Assuming that you are starting from the beginning in your definition, it is suggested that you start with the final product, which, in this case, is pupil outcome. What should the pupils be able to do, and what attitudes should they have? Once this question has been answered we can begin to look at the kind of teachers necessary to insure this type of outcome.

*** If we want primary pupils to be able to read, this suggests a teacher that is well grounded in the ability to teach reading.

*** If we want chemistry students who possess certain knowledges about chemistry, this suggests identifiable teacher proficiencies.

*** If we want chemistry students who have developed the ability to use an inductive approach in the solving of science problems,

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this suggests a type of teaching competency different from proficiency in imparting knowledge.

*** If we want pupils to have a good self-concept this suggests a teacher with identifiable affective characteristics.

With the pupil product criteria in mind we then attempt to complete the following two statements:

1. An effective teacher does:
2. An effective teacher is:

*The reader will notice that at this stage we do not emphasize what an effective teacher knows. This is not to say that knowledge is not important, for it is the keystone to all competency. What we do and what we are is based upon what we know and feel. Knowledge for its sake alone is not enough. To be relevant knowledge must be based upon what we expect teachers to do in relation to the growth of pupils.

A Systematic Approach

No claim is made that effective teaching is made up of a series of unrelated acts and competencies. However, in order to avoid confusion, and overlap within the program it is suggested that as one begins to focus in on the various competencies that those competencies be placed within a number of general categories. This type of categorizing also allows for a coding system. The general categories suggested are as follows:

- CHD: Child Development
- CMM: Curriculum Methods and Materials
- ICM: Instructional Communications
- PST: Professional Sensitivity Training

SCF: Social-Cultural Foundations

RES: Research in Education

TLA: Teaching Language Arts

TTP: Teaching Theories and Practices

If the developer is uncomfortable with the above he may feel free to designate his own categories.

Looking at a Possible Program

As an example let us make the following general statement concerning pupil outcomes, and try to determine what general and specific competencies are implied.

"In our primary school we want pupils who: (1) Enjoy coming to school (g) (2) Have a good self concept (g) (3) Are able to function in a social setting with a minimum of friction (g) (4) Are making "normal" progress in learning how to read (s) (5) Are making "normal" progress in mathematics (s) (6) Are internalizing good working habits (g) ETC ETC ETC ETC ETC

code g = general areas

s = specific areas

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive but merely to give us a start.

In order to meet the above goals we must have a teacher who" (1) Can provide a pleasant learning atmosphere (2) Can measure and prescribe a course of action involving self-concept (3) Understands the child and his environment (4) Can diagnose and prescribe instructional activities in reading (5) Can diagnose and prescribe instructional activities in mathematics (6) Can provide instructional activities which are interesting and challenging, and can provide a model for the pupils.

Each of the above "Can Do's" should result in a number of specific competencies. If we try to attack the whole we might become bogged down in the total weight of the problem. However, if we look at each specific "Can Do" and place it in one of our categories, then begin to look at specific competencies within each category, we can begin to see the emergence of an order.

For example, to provide a pleasant learning atmosphere implies certain competencies in general curriculum development (GCM) an understanding of how children develop (CHD) and an understanding of basic psychological principles (PST)

Each of the above "Can Do's" will invoke a number of the categories, and once identified can be cross-checked to provide cohesion.

N.B. You will notice that at this point we are still using rather vague terminology and will most likely continue in this vein until we identify the more specific competencies and behaviors.

Identifying Specific Competencies From the General

Recall that one of the pupil objectives was "pupils who were making "normal" progress in reading." This invokes a teacher who understands general learning theory (TTP), understands how children develop (CHD), understands basic psychological principles (PST), and understands the teaching of reading (TLA). As the first three of the above will most likely apply to a number of pupil outcomes they can be of a general nature; the last, however, (TLA), is for the most part related only to the specific area of language arts, and if we further narrow this to the area of reading, we are beginning to focus in on manageable competencies.

By following the above pattern we have completed the first step namely, identifying the broad (component) level of concern; the example used was the teaching of reading.

The teaching of reading in itself is still much too broad for identifying specific competencies; therefore, we should analyze the process and break it down into more manageable aspects. If we adhere to the Diagnostic-Prescriptive-Evaluative approach in all subject matter we can then reduce the broad field of reading into the following:

1. Various reading theories
2. Diagnosing of reading
3. Methods for meeting reading needs
4. Supplementary reading aids and materials
5. Utilization of the above knowledge and skills with pupils

We might agree that if a prospective teacher knows a number of reading theories, can diagnose his pupils, is able to utilize a sufficient number of alternative learning strategies, and can implement these strategies with effectiveness in working with pupils, there is a very good chance that he can be a successful reading teacher

We can now select one of the areas as our Cluster Objective in order to continue the process.

As an example let us select Reading Diagnosis---our objective might read:

Cluster Objective

The prospective teacher will demonstrate that he has a sufficient command of the specific terminology associated with reading diagnosis; and that he has command of a number of diagnostic procedures; and that when given

the opportunity he will demonstrate the ability to diagnose and prescribe possible learning strategies.

You will notice that the cluster objective is written in rather vague and sometimes non-behavioral terms. For example what do we mean by sufficient command???? What do we mean by a number of procedures?????

This non-behavioral terminology is quite permissible at this point as the Cluster Objective acts as the guideline for the writing of the more specific objectives contained within each module. The second step is: Identifying the general (cluster) goals, which in this case was the diagnosing of reading ability.

Having identified the general Cluster Objective we are now ready to place the specific objectives within our general cluster framework.

This step can best be done by first listing the various specific points which can bring about the desired behavior as identified in the Cluster Objective. This is often referred to as TASK ANALYSIS.

Following are some possible specific knowledges and performance activities which can bring about the desired consequences.

Terminology associated with reading diagnosis

Recognizing the symptoms of reading disability

Guidelines for diagnostic procedures

Identification of the causes of reading difficulty and failure

Techniques for gathering reading case histories

The Informal Reading Inventory (IRI)

The Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty

The use and evaluation of selected commercial tests

Guidelines and forms for writing a summary of diagnostic findings

The diagnosing of pupils in reading

The writer at this point needs to arrange the agreed upon objectives in a sequential hierarchy, that is, some of the objectives necessarily precede others. Step three would read:

From Cluster Objectives identify specific areas of concern and place them in a hierarchy

We are now ready to rewrite each specific objective in behavioral and/or measurable terms, and to look at specific prerequisites, assessments, and instructional activities.

At this point we will select one of the specific objectives to work on. (we will use the Informal Reading Inventory)

Again we must do a Task Analysis to determine what the student needs to know and do to demonstrate competence with an Informal Reading Inventory.

We have devised the following outline:

He needs to know what it is and the component parts thereof.

He needs to know when to use it, for what purpose and the limitations.

He needs to be able to administer it, and evaluate the results.

He needs to be able to make specific diagnosis based upon the results.

The module objective might look like this:

Objective

The student will demonstrate his competence in the function and use of an IRI by:

1. Explaining how the following IRI levels are determined
 1. Independent level
 2. Instructional level
 3. Frustration level

4. Hearing (listening) comprehension level or capacity level

- II. Describing the use and limitations of an IRI
- III. Giving the symbols one would use in recording the following pupil oral reading behaviors:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Hesitation_____ | 5. Insertion_____ |
| 2. Mispronunciation_____ | 6. Repetition_____ |
| 3. Omission_____ | 7. Word pronounced for pupil by |
| 4. Substitution_____ | test administrator_____ |

- IV. Outlining the appropriate steps in preparing an IRI for administration to a specific grade level.

(N.B.: The first four are cognitive aspects and would most likely be demonstrated either by a paper and pencil test or oral interview.)

- V. Administering an IRI to a pupil, or pupils and summarizing the findings in usable terms highlighting the pupil's strengths, weakness, and approximate level or reading performance.

(N.B.: This is a doing or demonstrative competence and would most likely be observed by the instructor or his representative.)

- VI. Writing a short explanation of prescribed action to be taken to aid the pupil in reading based upon the IRI results.

(N.B.: This would be a culminating activity which would most likely be an extension of IV.)

The fourth step is designing specific Module Objective(s).

At this point one should check the specific objective(s) against the Cluster Objective and then proceed with the remainder of the Module.